

## COMMENTS ON TELENOVA PROPOSALS

- φ. a. It is disappointing to see implementors going ahead and releasing extensions without consulting others first. If this process continues we will rapidly lose what standardisation we have and COMAL will develop dialects much as has happened to BASIC. COMAL would thus throw away one of its great advantages.
- b. If the comments on the proposals which follow seem negative it's probably because, for what we want, the language is fine as it stands and does not need much change. Other user groups may want the facilities - in which case let them be heard!

1. This is not required and many users will, I suspect, find it more confusing than useful especially when arrays of more than one dimension are involved.
2. When we refer to whole arrays in other circumstances the parentheses are required (e.g. in parameter passing). I would prefer to see them used here as well
- $a() := 1$
- If this proposal and proposal 5 are accepted, the way would be clear for the introduction of a rule insisting that variables must have a value explicitly assigned to them before they are used. I would also support this further extension.
- 3,4 See comments on proposal 1.
5. Yes, I like it!

6. I presume that this proposal is intended mainly to clarify the meaning of  $\phi$  as a substring specifier? If this is the case, then fine.
7. Using Acornsoft COMAL I have got used to ' (apostrophe) instead of : (colon). Acorn took this from BBC BASIC but I reckon it's the better choice because the colon is already used in more than one context.  
A print list consisting entirely of separators should be allowed.  
PRINT ''''  
is obviously useful. Other combinations are useful either before or after, e.g., a loop used to print a table of values.
8. The absence of statements of this sort is one of the attractions of COMAL. It is a major aid to program readability. Please, NO!
- 9, 10 Not of major importance - but fair as an extension. Surely the parameter list must contain at least two items?
11. I feel that this is the sort of specialist function which users should provide for themselves if they need them.
12. This looks like a rather idiosyncratic method to be used in one place only. If this sort of thing proliferates the language will become inconsistent and difficult to learn or use. PRINT and STR\$ both convert numbers to strings of characters - can the controls provided for PRINT be extended to include STR\$?

13. I can't get enthusiastic about this either. Is it going to give us any power which is going to be of use to users of COMAL?
- 14.(?) Subarrays look rather like the earlier alias proposals - but under another alias! Again it seems more confusing than useful, especially when one starts to think about arrays with more than one dimension.

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